

Rhode Island Charter Public Schools:  
**2017 Request for Proposals for New Student Seats**

Office of College and Career Readiness  
Rhode Island Department of Education

Release date:  
*March 29, 2017*

For new charter student seats proposing to start opening in:  
*Fall 2018*

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# Overview of Rhode Island Charter Schools:

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In 1995, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a law permitting teachers and school district personnel to establish new public schools. The law provided these schools some flexibility from district mandates, empowering teachers to innovate around school models and methods of instruction. Several years later, the state legislature amended the law, this time allowing for nonprofit organizations or Rhode Island colleges and universities to establish new public schools again with the goal of encouraging innovation and improvement in student performance. In 2008, another amendment passed enabling “mayoral academies,” a unique type of charter school where mayors establish regional charter schools, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes and strengthening communities.

Though Rhode Island’s charter schools have unique qualities, they share characteristics common among charter schools: They are free, independent, nonselective public schools of choice. Charter schools have flexibility and autonomy to devise curricula, choose instructional methods, and develop a mission that best meets the needs of students. The governing boards of charter schools are self-appointing and are typically independent from district governance, policies, and procedures. In exchange for these freedoms, all charter schools must improve student performance, operate a successful organization, and act as responsible stewards of public funds, according to the terms of a charter. Charters are issued by the Rhode Island the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (the Council) to charter school boards and describe each school’s academic and operational targets, which are the manifestations of the promises charter schools make to students, families, and the state of Rhode Island. Charter Schools are one strategy in a portfolio options to create high-quality seat opportunities for Rhode Island’s students.

Charter schools in Rhode Island currently serve over 7,000 students (about 5% of the public school population) in grades K-12. The majority of Rhode Island charter schools are in urban areas, but charter schools exist throughout the state, and enroll student populations as different and diverse as our communities.

# Overview of this Request for Proposals:

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## **Background:**

Rhode Island's Charter School *2017 Request for Proposals for New Student Seats* sets forth the criteria and expectations for applicants wishing to create high quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island's students – either through starting a new charter or expanding an existing charter. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will accept and evaluate all proposals, and recommend to the Council those proposals that are likely to result in high quality educational opportunities. The Council has final authority to approve proposals. Proposals for expansion are treated as a major amendment to an existing charter.

## **Priority for Educationally Disadvantaged Students:**

RIDE will prioritize proposals that focus on increasing the number of high-quality education options for educationally disadvantaged students: economically-disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and/or English learners.

## **Navigating this Document:**

To help provide consistency and clarity for charter applicants, RIDE streamlined the 2017 authorization process for new and expanding charters into one centralized document. This enables RIDE to provide key information to all applicants, while also differentiating the questions and depth of information needed based on the circumstances of each type of proposal. To help applicants navigate this document, RIDE has broken down the required questions for each proposal narrative section based on three different proposal types:

| Proposal Type      | Proposal Description  |
|--------------------|---|
| New Charter        | A proposal that will result in a brand new charter.   |
| Standard Expansion | A proposal for expansion in total enrollment for an existing charter, less than both 25% of current enrollment and 100 students, with no material changes to the charters' grade levels, enrollment catchment area, nor the addition of a new school.   |
| Material Expansion | A proposal for an expansion for an existing charter that will result in any of the following: a) an increase of enrollment at least 25% of current enrollment or 100 students; b) changes to the charter's grade levels; c) changes to the charter's enrollment catchment area; and/or, d) the addition of at least one new school. |

All information required of applicant teams can be found in each section of the proposal narrative. There are sections for new school proposals, standard, and material expansions. Some sections may only require information for a specific charter proposal type (ex: new charter proposals only). Appendix D provides a checklist of sections that are required for each type of proposal. If a question is required for your proposal type but is not directly applicable to your proposal, please explicitly state the reason in your narrative.

Throughout this document, links, and notes are provided to assist applicant teams. Other guidance documents can be found on the RIDE website. These materials do not attempt nor profess to provide

guidance on every federal, state, and local law or regulation that is applicable to charter schools. The charter school is responsible for submitting new seat proposals that are in compliance with all appropriate laws and regulations. As teams work to complete new seat proposals, please feel free to reach out to RIDE with questions.

Also, please note that these proposal types only differentiate the responses that applicants are required to provide, and does not differentiate the public comment or local impact analysis process.

**Appendices:**

RIDE has included the following appendices at the end of this document to assist applicant teams with completing and submitting their proposal.

| Appendix  | Appendix Description   |
|---|--|
| Appendix A: Required Proposal Narrative Attachments       | Provides an overview of all of the attachments required to be provided by each proposal type in addition to the proposal narrative.                                  |
| Appendix B: Additional Charter Type Proposal Requirements | Provides an overview of the additional application requirements for each applicant based on the type of charter in the proposal (district, independent, or mayoral). |
| Appendix C: Definition of Terms                           | Provides an glossary of key terms used through this document.  |
| Appendix D: Proposal Checklist                            | Provides an overview of the required sections of the proposal narrative that each applicant must complete based on the proposal type.                                |

# Proposal Review Process and Timeline:

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*The proposal review process and timeline consists of 4 key sections: 1) the application process; 2) public comment; 3) proposal evaluation; and, 4) the Council's consideration. Below RIDE has provided detailed information on the components and deadlines for each of these process sections.*

## Application Process

### **Technical Assistance Sessions (Spring 2017)**

RIDE will provide support to prospective applicant teams in the Technical Assistance Sessions. The objective of these Technical Assistance Sessions is to provide clarity and support regarding the application process and criteria. The dates for the sessions will be determined after the release of this application to the RIDE website and will occur no later than a month prior to the submission deadline.

Prospective applicant groups interested in Technical Assistance Sessions should e-mail [RICharters@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RICharters@ride.ri.gov) to notify them of their interest, as well as topics they'd like covered during the Technical Assistance Sessions. RIDE will notify all prospective applicants of when the Technical Assistance Sessions are scheduled, and will post the time, date, and location of these sessions on RIDE's website.

### **Submission Deadline (June 23, 2017)**

Proposal submissions are due on June 23, 2017. Please see Deadlines and Submission Instructions for more information on how to submit a proposal. Any proposal received after the deadline will be rejected.

### **Completeness Check (June 30, 2017)**

RIDE will conduct a completeness check of all proposals received by the June 23, 2017 deadline. Applicant teams with incomplete proposals will be notified of outstanding item(s). Any RIDE-identified outstanding item is due no later than June 30, 2017. RIDE reserves the right to reject substantially incomplete requests or request additional information or revisions after June 30, 2017. RIDE will notify all charter schools seeking new seats of their completion status once verified.

### **Proposals Posted Publicly (July 7, 2017)**

All satisfactory and completed proposals will be posted to the RIDE webpage.

## Public Comment Process

### **Providing Written Public Comment to RIDE (July 7, 2017 – November 1, 2017)**

The public will be invited to provide written public comment on the completed charter proposals once published on RIDE's charter website starting on July 7 and lasting through November 1. Comments may be submitted by e-mail to [RICharters@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RICharters@ride.ri.gov), by mail to RIDE at 255 Westminster Street Providence, RI 02903 or at public hearings, scheduled by RIDE. The public may also provide public comment at public hearings (see below for more information).

### **Providing Local Impact Analyses to RIDE (*July 7, 2017 – August 25, 2017*)**

Any applicant, school district, elected official, government entity, or research institution (including, but not limited to post-secondary institutions) may provide a written local impact analysis statement directly to RIDE by August 25, 2017. This local impact analysis statement may choose to comment on a proposal's: a) fiscal impact on a city or town; b) programmatic impact on the sending school district; and/or, c) the educational impact on the students in the district. These local impact analysis statements may be submitted by e-mail to [RICharters@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RICharters@ride.ri.gov) or by mail to RIDE at 255 Westminster Street Providence, RI 02903. There is no specified format for local impact analyses.

### **Public Posting of Local Impact Analyses (*September 1, 2017*)**

For each proposal, RIDE will publicly post on its website on September 1, 2017 both RIDE's local impact analysis as well as all received local impact analyses. The public may choose to review and incorporate these local impact analyses into their public comments that they provide in written format to RIDE or via public comment hearings.

### **Public Comment Hearings (*September 1, 2017 – November 1, 2017*)**

RIDE will also post no later than September 1, 2017 a schedule for public hearings for each charter proposal. RIDE will conduct at least two (2) public hearings to be held in the community where each proposed charter school is to be located.

## **Proposal Quality Evaluation Process**

### **Overview of Proposal Quality Evaluation (*July – November 2017*)**

In addition to evaluating public comment and the local impact analysis, RIDE will also conduct an evaluation that focuses on the quality of the submitted proposal. For proposals that will result in a new school (either through a new charter or a material expansion containing a new school), RIDE may, consistent with nationally recognized best practices, seek additional external capacity. This review process will include a capacity review for all applicants and feedback regarding the quality of the proposal against RIDE-established standards. This review will focus on evaluating the quality of the proposal and include an interview.

### **Capacity Interview (*October 2017*)**

All applicants will participate in a capacity interview as part of the proposal quality evaluation process. The capacity interview is an in-person interview designed to yield further detail about the applicants' plan and their capacity to implement the plan. The capacity interview will focus on standards that the proposal evaluators have identified as not yet having been met by the applicant team. To help applicant teams prepare for the capacity interview, RIDE will provide each applicant team a draft proposal quality evaluation at least a week prior to the capacity interview.

RIDE will work with each applicant team to schedule the interview as early as possible. For new charter proposals, the proposal's leadership team and founding board members are all expected to participate in the interview. For expansions, the charter's leadership team should invite board members and



additional staff as appropriate.

### **Final Quality Evaluation and Response** *(November 2017)*

After the capacity interview, RIDE will update and share with applicants the final proposal quality evaluation. The final proposal quality evaluation will focus solely on the quality of the proposal and is not reflective of the commissioner's final recommendation as it does not incorporate an evaluation of the local impact or public comment. Applicant teams will be invited to submit a two-page response to the evaluation addressed to the Commissioner. This response will be reviewed prior to finalizing the Commissioner's recommendation.

## **Step 4: Recommendation, Vote and Approval**

### **Commissioner's Recommendation** *(November 2017)*

The Commissioner recommends for approval those proposals most likely to result in increased expansion of high-quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island's students. The Commissioner's recommendation will be informed by, but not be limited to, RIDE's review of: 1) the quality of the Request for Proposal for New Charter Seats; 2) evidence of community need and support; 3) if applicable, the school's proven track record of achievement and success; 4) the school's operational plan; and 5) the impact on the sending school district(s) and all students, cities, and towns involved. The Commissioner will provide the final recommendation to each applicant prior to making the recommendation public to the Council.

### **Council Vote of Approval** *(December 2017 – Spring 2018)*

The Commissioner will bring all proposal recommendations to the Council for consideration in December. For new charter proposals, an affirmative council vote will serve as preliminary approval. New charter proposals will then enter a readiness period conducted by RIDE and be brought back to the Council for consideration of final approval in Spring 2018. For expansion, an affirmative council vote will serve as the authorization to amend the charter to enable the proposed expansion.

# Proposal Submission Instructions:

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The deadline for receipt of all proposal materials is **5:00PM, June 23, 2017**.

Incomplete requests or materials received after the final deadline will not be considered.

**Format:** The Proposal for New Seats should apply the following:

- ☐ One-inch margins
- ☐ 12-point font
- ☐ Double-spaced
- ☐ A table of contents that references all components
- ☐ Page numbers (including on attachments)
- ☐ 50 pages, maximum
  - Excludes cover page, table of contents, and attachments
  - Please use clear, concise language
  - RIDE understands that some charter schools will not use all 50 pages as the length and depth of the request will mirror the scale of expansion. For instance, a request to add a grade level at an existing school might differ significantly from a request to add a new school and become a network charter school.
- ☐ Use footnotes for all references and citations. All excerpts must be cited.
- ☐ All submissions must be proofread
  
- ☐ **All complete submissions will be available to the public and posted on the RIDE website.**

**Submission:** Applicant teams must submit the following:

- ☐ one (1) electronic PDF file (with completed and scanned signature page)
- ☐ one (1) original hard copy, bound, with original signatures

Any appendices and attachments should be integrated within the bound hard copy and within a single PDF file. Please do not mail or email components separately.

**Hard copies should be mailed to:**

Office of College and Career Readiness  
Attn: Stephen Osborn, Chief for Innovation  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminister Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**PDF files should be emailed to:**

RICharters@ride.ri.gov

# I. Cover Sheet

*The following cover sheet should be used for all Requests for Proposals for New Student Seats:*

**Name of Charter:**

**Charter Type:**

**Location of Charter School:**

**Location of Additional Schools (if applicable):**

**Enrolling Communities:**

**Primary Contact:**

**Role with Charter Public School:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**City/State/Zip:**

**Email:**

| Charter  | Grade Levels Served | Enrollment | Communities Served |
|--|---------------------|------------|--------------------|
| AY 17-18 for current charter (expansions only) |                     |            |                    |
| AY18-19 for proposed new or expanded charter   |                     |            |                    |
| AY22-23 (5-years) for proposed charter         |                     |            |                    |
| Proposed new or expanded charter at-scale      |                     |            |                    |

**Signature of Board Chair:**

**Print Name:**

**Date:**

**Position/Title:**

**Signature of School Leader:**

**Print Name:**

**Date:**

**Position/Title:**

## II. Executive Summary

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*About this section:*

The executive summary, together with the application cover sheet, should provide an accurate and succinct overview of the proposal. These documents may be shared directly with the press and other stakeholders once the proposal is deemed complete and posted publicly for review and comment. Provide an executive summary, *no more than two pages in length*, which summarizes your charter proposal. The executive summary should not contain new information or content that is otherwise not included in the proposal narrative and attachments.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal executive summary should include:*

- A mission statement
- The need for establishing the charter
- The goals of the school
- A description of the individuals who comprise the applicant group
- An overview of the school's educational program
- A description of any unique features of the program and mission-specific areas of focus
- An overview of the school's governance and management structures
- A discussion of teaching at the school, including support and supervision for teachers
- An overview of the organizational plan, including any relationships with organizations that will be major partners or providers such as school districts, charter management organizations, or colleges and universities
- A summary of what the school ultimately hopes to accomplish.

### **BOTH STANDARD AND MATERIAL CHARTER EXPANSIONS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal executive summary should include:*

- An overview and rationale for the requested expansion
- An explanation of how the expansion will support the charter's existing mission statement
- A description of community need and support for the expansion
- A description of the school's past track record of sustained high performance as it relates to the goal of the original charter
- A description of how the expansion will impact or require key changes in the charter's educational program
- A description of the student demand for the requested expansion
- A description of how the charter will adjust its organizational capacity to accommodate the demand
- A description of key financial implications for the charter as a result of the expansion.

### III. Mission Statement

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*About this section:*

A mission statement should be inspiring yet attainable. Stakeholders who read the mission statement should be able to know if and when the mission is being achieved; progress should be measurable. Abstain from using clichés, jargon, and technical terminology.

A mission statement should clearly and concisely communicate the core purpose of your proposed charter school. It should answer the following questions: What will your school provide? To whom? How (using what methods)?

#### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposed mission statement should:*

- Identify a mission statement for the proposed school that is meaningful, manageable, and measurable.
- Provide a brief analysis of the mission statement that discusses the specific words selected to convey the mission.

#### **STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*No information required as standard expansion proposals should not materially change a charter's mission.*

#### **MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal mission statement should:*

- Identify and explain changes (if any) to the school's mission statement as a result of the requested expansion.
- Explain how the charter's proposed expansion will support and sustain the school's mission.

## IV. Proposed New Student Seats & Enrollment

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*About this section:*

All charter proposals should result in new student seats that will provide high-quality educational opportunities. In this section, proposals should describe the anticipated student growth as a result of the charter proposal, as well as a compelling rationale for the proposed growth.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The charter proposal should:*

- Provide a table indicating student enrollment expectations for the first charter term and then beyond. Include in the table the number of students in each grade by year, and by school site (if more than one). If the proposed expansion results in a network charter or the expansion of a network charter, then a table should be included for at least: a) the entire network charter; and b) each individual network charter school affected by the expansion.

Please see a sample enrollment table below:

| School Year | Grade Levels Served | Total Enrollment | School Districts |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2018/19     |                     |                  |                  |
| 2019/20     |                     |                  |                  |
| 2020/21     |                     |                  |                  |
| 2021/22     |                     |                  |                  |
| 2022/23     |                     |                  |                  |

- Provide a clear rationale for the school's growth plan that contemplates the benefits and challenges of enrolling more or less students per year.
  - Explain in detail the rationale for selecting this particular school size.
  - Discuss assumptions regarding student attrition and the school's plan to replace students if/when spots are vacated.
- Summarize the school recruitment process and explain how the school and its program will be publicized and marketed throughout the community to a broad cross-section of prospective students including to families traditionally less informed about school options.
- Describe an enrollment process that includes a plan for a public lottery, including any weights or special design considerations, and is open, fair, and in accordance with the charter school statute and regulations.

## **MATERIAL AND STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The charter proposal should:*

- Provide a description of the charter school’s expansion plan. This description should include an overview and timeline for the following, as applicable:
  - Total enrollment
  - Grades served
  - Addition of a school district(s) to the catchment area; and/or
  - Additional schools within a charter school network.
- Provide a rationale for why the charter school is requesting the above expansion. This rationale should include, but not be limited to:
  - Why the charter school is requesting this particular school size; and
  - Why the charter school is requesting the expansion at this specific moment in time.
- Provide a description of the target student population for the expansion and how the requested expansion will enable the charter school to better serve educationally disadvantaged students
- Include an enrollment table, as an attachment, that reflects the requested expansion.
  - The enrollment table should start with the 2017-18 school year and include as many years as necessary for the school to reach its maximum proposed enrollment.
  - The enrollment table should include: grades levels served, total enrollment, and school districts served.
  - If the proposed expansion results in a network charter or the expansion of a network charter, then a table should be included for at least: a) the entire network charter; and b) each individual network charter school affected by the expansion.

Please see a sample enrollment table below:

| School Year       | Grade Levels Served | Total Enrollment | School Districts |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2017/18 (Current) |                     |                  |                  |
| 2018/19           |                     |                  |                  |
| 2019/20           |                     |                  |                  |
| 2020/21           |                     |                  |                  |
| 2021/22           |                     |                  |                  |
| 2022/23           |                     |                  |                  |

## V. Goals

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### *About this section:*

Goals are the manifestation of the promises a charter school makes to students, families, and the state of Rhode Island. In this section, applicants will describe the goals of the proposed charter school. As part of the new charter framework, RIDE will work to create school specific goals for new and existing charters. Each goal should indicate a specific target to be met, using a specific metric within a certain time period. Each charter school also has the opportunity to develop mission-specific goals and measures that evaluate the unique qualities of individual schools.

Charter schools in Rhode Island are held to common measures of academic, financial and organizational performance. Specifically:

- Student Academic Performance
- Financial Viability and Sustainability
- Organizational Quality
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Student academic performance is most important in annual performance reviews and renewal decisions. Rhode Island's statewide accountability system will form the basis of student academic performance reviews and applicants should demonstrate an understanding of how schools in Rhode Island are measured and held accountable. As the state transitions under ESSA, these measures will also change.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

#### *The proposed goals should:*

- Provide **at least three** goals that may be used to assess academic progress of students. One goal should be based on outcomes related to the current statewide accountability system. Two additional academic goals should enable a deeper understanding of academic progress in core areas, and/or in subjects not currently tested using statewide assessments, and/or in grade levels not currently assessed using statewide assessments.
- Provide **at least two** goals that may be used to evaluate the *mission* of the proposed school (e.g. college course completion, progress relative to established competency standards, industry certifications, language acquisition, completion of portfolios, completion of artistic projects, etc.).
- Provide **at least two** additional goals that may be used to evaluate the *organizational strength* of the proposed school.
- Provide any additional goals or targets the applicants wish to propose to evaluate performance of the proposed school.



If issued preliminary approval, school representatives and RIDE will meet to develop a Final Charter prior to final approval. At that point in time, RIDE and the school will work together to determine which goals included here (or refined versions of them) will be included directly into the school's Accountability Plan.

**STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*This section should include:*

- Describe the charter school's current progress towards successfully meeting the charter's goals.
- For each goal that the charter school is not on track to meet, describe the strategy(ies) that the school has implemented to address the respective deficiency. Please provide a rationale for why the charter school selected this strategy(ies) and the respective results so far.

**MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*This section should include:*

- Describe the charter school's current progress towards successfully meeting the charter's goals.
- Reflect upon the underlying factors that have contributed towards the charter school's current progress (both positive and negative) towards meeting their goals.
- For each goal that the charter school is not on track to meet, describe the strategy(ies) that the school has implemented to address the respective deficiency. Please provide a rationale for why the charter school selected this strategy(ies) and the respective results so far.
- Describe how the requested expansion will impact the charter school's goals. This description may include a proposed updating of charter goals that reflects the scale of the requested expansion. (For example, schools expanding to additional grades may require updated or new goals, while schools simply increasing enrollment in an existing grade level may need no revision of their goals.)

## VI. Community Need and Support

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*About this section:*

This section should communicate why the applicants are proposing to open new charter school seats for this particular community or communities, and how the school will become a part of the wider community. Applicants proposing enrollment areas not tied to city or district boundaries (e.g. statewide catchment area, virtual programs, etc.) must still consider how the following prompts apply to the school structure they are proposing.

All proposals may optionally provide evidence of community support as an attachment. Evidence of community support may include, but is not limited to: letters of support from community stakeholders, evidence of parent demand for the requested expansion, and official written support by the town or city Councils from sending districts (as defined by RIGL § 16-77-5.1.c).

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal's community need and support should include:*

- A description of the community or communities from which the proposed school intends to draw students, including community demographics.
- A description of the target student population, especially in the context of the priority to serve educationally disadvantaged students.
- A specific rationale for selecting this particular community, and highlight how the proposed school will enhance or expand opportunities already available within this community. Strong responses will go beyond an analysis of state test scores or a general argument for school choice.
- A discussion of the degree to which the applicant group has consulted with community members, including the strategies used to solicit community input regarding the educational and programmatic needs of students.
- A description of the extent to which community members will continue to be engaged during future planning and operations of the school, and the nature and extent of any ongoing involvement in the governance and/or operations of the school.
- A description of the extent to which community partners or relationships will create opportunities for students and support the mission and success of the school.

### **STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION**

*The proposal's community need and support should include:*

- description of how the proposed expansion will help support each respective community.
- discussion of the degree to which the charter school has engaged community members regarding the proposed expansion.

### **MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal's community need and support should include:*

- A description of how the proposed expansion will help support each respective community that the charter serves.
- An explanation of the degree to which the charter school has engaged community members regarding the proposed expansion.
- A description of how community members are currently involved in the existing school and how that involvement will be sustained upon expansion. This description should include the nature and extent of any ongoing community involvement in the governance and/or operations of the school.

## VII. Educational Program (New Charter Proposals)

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*About this section:*

A clear and focused vision for an educational program is crucial to the success of a charter school proposal. Responses to the following prompts should inspire confidence and describe how your educational program will serve the needs of all students. RIDE recognizes that the educational program submitted for a new charter proposal will substantially differ from existing charters with a track record of academic performance. This section pertains specifically to new charter proposals. The following section will apply specifically to expansion proposals.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The educational program should include:*

#### **VI(A). Guiding Principles**

A charter school's guiding principles should define a set of core beliefs and values that forms the basis for the rest of the program, including the pedagogical approach, curriculum decisions, assessment practices, school culture, and academic and organizational goal-setting. The principles should be informed by research, experience, and proven practice.

- List the guiding principles of the charter school.
- Define or clearly explain each of the guiding principles. Discuss the research and experiences that have informed the formation of these guiding principles.
- Include examples of how each principle will translate into actions and decisions at your proposed school.
- Provide examples of role models—schools, programs, or individuals—who are succeeding using related principles under similar conditions.

#### **VI(B). Curriculum and Coursework**

Rhode Island's charter schools have the freedom to choose and/or develop curricula and courses of study that best serve the diverse needs of the student population and reflect the mission of the school. In this section, reviewers should be provided with a comprehensive sense of the breadth and depth of the program, including how curriculum and coursework will align across grade levels. Regardless of whether the curriculum is purchased, previously developed, or internally developed, it must be clear that it will be aligned with Common Core Standards and other standards adopted by the state of Rhode Island, such as the Next Generation Science Standards.

In a table organized by grade level, outline the course of study/ course offerings at the school. Include core academic subjects as well as special, elective, alternative, and other coursework.

Provide a narrative that further explains the course of study and curriculum at the school. Include sufficient detail in areas of study that are specific to the mission of the school (e.g. engineering, arts, etc.). If decisions have not yet been made in certain areas of the curriculum, please explain how decisions

will be made at a later date.

- Make a strong case in support of the curriculum. What research, experiences, and best practices support this curricular plan? Be sure to underscore how the course of study expands upon or enhances what is currently available to students.
- Note which standards are guiding decisions around curriculum, and provide an assurance that curriculum will align with appropriate standards.
- Describe how the school will manage the development, evaluation and refinement of curriculum over time.

#### **VI(C). Learning Environment and Pedagogy**

Please explain how specific instructional methods will ensure that your academic program is accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels. Focus on your target student community. Be sure to specify how these instructional practices will work to close performance gaps.

- Describe examples of classroom environments for students at your proposed school. Include details around class size, class structure and classroom layout, differentiated by grade or subject as applicable.
- Describe several instructional methods and techniques that will be used to deliver the curriculum. Specify which instructional methods would remain consistent across subjects or across grade levels. Alternatively, discuss how instructional methods might differ by subject or as students grow.
- Make a case in support of these instructional methods. How will these methods work to accelerate student achievement? What research, experiences, and best practices support these decisions?

#### **VI(D). Specific Populations**

Charter schools are nonselective public schools and must be prepared to enroll and serve all students, including struggling students, gifted students, students with disabilities, students learning English, and students with other diverse learning needs.

The general education classroom needs to be an environment which is responsive to the educational needs of all children. A continuum of services must also be available through the school so that all students can participate fully in the educational program and mission of the school. This section of the application should describe the school's programs and services, and how they will be implemented within the context of the proposed school. The applicant should consider the stated target population and priority to serve economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, or limited English proficient students (also referred to as English learners or English language learners).

##### **1. For struggling students:**

- Describe how the proposed school will define and identify which students are struggling.
- Describe the intervention strategies that will be used for struggling students.

##### **2. For students learning English:**

Information on the laws, regulations, and best practices relating to students learning English.

- Demonstrate an awareness of the rights and appropriate expectations for students learning English. Acknowledge which laws and regulations govern the standards and services for these students, and provide an assurance that your proposed school will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Describe the procedures that the proposed school will use to identify students who are learning English.
- Discuss the English language (EL) instructional program that the school will employ for its ELs, examples of its effectiveness, and/or the research base that supports it. Explain when and where EL services will be provided, within the confines of the schedule.

### **3. For students with disabilities:**

Information on the laws, regulations, and best practices relating to students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate an awareness of the rights and appropriate expectations for students with disabilities. Acknowledge which laws and regulations govern the standards and services for these students, and provide an assurance that your proposed school will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Describe procedures that the proposed school will use to identify students with disabilities. Be sure to address how the school will ensure students are not inappropriately diagnosed.

### **4. For gifted or advanced students:**

- Provide a clear rationale for how the school will define and identify students as gifted or advanced.
- Describe resources, methods, and services (including personnel) that will be provided to gifted or advanced students. Include research and other evidence that support this approach.

## **VI(E). Assessment System**

Charter schools are expected to develop a comprehensive assessment system. A comprehensive assessment system will include (but should not be limited to) state assessments, and serves as a structure for how teachers and administrators will measure what students know and are able to do from attending your school. A comprehensive assessment system should measure the academic progress of individual students, cohorts of students over time, and the school as a whole, and will provide information to a variety of stakeholders about whether the school is an academic success.

- Discuss several of the questions your school will seek to answer or track progress through its assessment system.
- Describe the types of assessments that will be used at the school. Organize the discussion by content area and grade level.
- Discuss what will happen with assessment results once collected. How the data be used, and by whom?

## **VI(F). Promotion and Graduation Policy**

- Explain the proposed standards for promoting students from one grade to the next. Include in the description any provisions related to retention of students. For high schools, include any school-specific graduation requirements.

- Address how the school will inform parents about promotion and graduation decisions.

#### **VI(G). School Culture**

This subsection prompts applicants to describe what will foster and maintain a healthy school culture and environment for the benefit of the whole school community. It also asks applicants to discuss the character skills and behaviors that will be valued at the school.

- Include a compelling description of the culture at the school, and how the culture and climate of the school is related to student outcomes and expectations.
- Provide a description of the strategies that will be used to establish the desired school culture and/or climate, including the research, experiences, and other evidence that informs these decisions.
- Provide plans for maintaining a safe and orderly environment, including behavior management and discipline procedures. These plans must be supported by research and evidence from experience and best practices.
- Provide an assurance that the applicants will craft a comprehensive discipline policy in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations, including a general discipline policy and a special education discipline policy.

## VII. Educational Program (Expansion Proposals)

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### *About this section:*

A clear and focused vision for an educational program is crucial to the success of a charter school proposal. Responses to the following prompts should inspire confidence and describe how your educational program has served the needs of all students. RIDE recognizes that the educational program submitted for a new charter proposal will substantially differ from existing charters with a track record of academic performance. This section pertains specifically to charter expansion proposals. The previous section pertains specifically to new charter proposals.

### *About track records of academic performance:*

Schools seeking to expand their charter must have a clear track record of successfully providing quality educational opportunities to their students. RIDE will review all available data to evaluate whether not a charter has a clear track record of success. This evidence will definitively include an analysis of the charter's performance on the statewide accountability system. A clear track record should not include any significant deficiencies in student performance on the statewide accountability or charter school performance review systems.

In addition, charters may provide additional evidence of performance against school specific goals to support the statewide accountability system results in determining whether a school has a track record of success. While RIDE will review all available data in evaluating a school's track record, RIDE will heavily consider the most recent year of student achievement data as the clearest indicator of a school's current ability to provide future quality educational opportunities.

### **STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

#### *Proposals for charter expansion should:*

- Describe the charter school's proven track record of sustained high performance that provides confidence that, when taking the requested expansion into account, the school will be able to meet its proposed academic goals.
  - The description should combine performance data with a compelling narrative that indicates that the charter school will sustain its track record of high performance throughout the proposed expansion.
  - This description should include, at a minimum, an analysis of reading and math proficiency data from state assessments, as well as progress from internal assessment data.
  - Charter schools that are part of a national charter management organization must include the track record from their Rhode Island schools, but may also include the track record of performance from the entire charter management organization.
- Identify and describe the specific practices of the charter school that have enabled it to sustain high academic achievement. This description should include how the charter school will ensure that key elements of the program are kept intact and/or strengthened for all students as it expands. Charter schools may consider (but are not limited to):



- Providing a detailed examination of the school’s guiding principles, pedagogy, and other practices to date, and a compelling rationale for why the charter seeking an expansion believes these practices have yielded strong student outcomes.
- Including a detailed description of how the school will continue to implement and build upon these practices with all new and existing students.

**MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*Proposals for charter expansion should:*

- Describe the charter school’s proven track record of sustained high performance that provides confidence that, when taking the requested expansion into account, the school will be able to meet its proposed academic goals.
  - The description should combine performance data with a compelling narrative that indicates that the charter school will sustain its track record of high performance throughout the proposed expansion.
  - This description should include, at a minimum, an analysis of reading and math proficiency data from state assessments, as well as progress from internal assessment data.
  - Charter schools that are part of a national charter management organization must include the track record from their Rhode Island schools, but may also include the track record of performance from the entire charter management organization.
- Identify and describe the specific practices of the charter school that have enabled it to sustain high academic achievement. This description should include how the charter school will ensure that key elements of the program are kept intact and/or strengthened for all students as it expands. Charter schools may consider (but are not limited to):
  - Providing a detailed examination of the school’s guiding principles, pedagogy, and other practices to date, and a compelling rationale for why the charter seeking an expansion believes these practices have yielded strong student outcomes.
  - Including a detailed description of how the school will continue to implement and build upon these practices with all new and existing students.
- Identify and describe how the requested expansion will result in substantial changes for each of the following categories:

| Category:          | Requirement:  |
|--------------------|---|
| Guiding Principles | <p>Identify and describe any changes to the set of core beliefs and values that forms the basis for the rest of the program, including the pedagogical approach, curriculum decisions, assessment practices, school culture, and academic and organizational goal-setting. The principles should be informed by research, experience, and proven practice.</p> <p>For each new principle, include examples of how each principle will translate into actions and decisions at your proposed school.</p> |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Curriculum and Coursework         | <p>In a table organized by each new grade level, outline the course of study/ course offerings at the school. Include core academic subjects as well as special, elective, alternative, and other coursework.</p> <p>Provide a narrative that further explains the course of study and curriculum at the school. Include sufficient detail in areas of study that are specific to the mission of the school (for example, engineering, arts, etc.). If decisions have not yet been made in certain areas of the curriculum, please explain how decisions will be made at a later date.</p> <p>Describe how the school will manage the development, evaluation, and refinement of curriculum over time.</p> |
| Learning Environment and Pedagogy | <p>Describe how any changes to the charter school's learning environment and pedagogy for the new proposed grades will ensure that your academic program is accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels. Changes may include, but are not limited to, classroom environment/structure and instructional methods/techniques.</p> <p>If decisions have not yet been made in certain areas of the learning environment and pedagogy for certain grades, please explain how decisions will be made at a later date.</p>  |
| Specific Populations              | <p>Describe any changes to the charter school's approach, for the new proposed grade levels, to identifying and serving: struggling students; English learners; students with disabilities; and gifted or advanced students.</p>   |
| Assessment System                 | <p>Describe any changes to the charter school's comprehensive assessment system for the new proposed grade levels. This description should include the type of assessments that will be used by the school for the new grade levels, organized by content area.</p> <p>If decisions have not yet been made in certain areas of the comprehensive assessment system for certain grades, please explain how decisions will be made at a later date.</p>  |
| Promotion and Graduation Policy   | <p>Describe any changes to the charter school's promotion and graduation policy for the new proposed grade levels. For schools expanding into high schools for the first time, include any school-specific graduation requirements.</p> <p>If decisions have not yet been made in certain areas of the school's promotion and graduation policy for certain grades, please explain how decisions will be made at a later date.</p>   |
| School Culture                    | <p>Describe any changes to the charter school's strategies to foster and maintain a healthy school culture. These changes may include, but are not limited to, behavior management and discipline procedures. For each change, provide a description of the strategy that will be used to establish the desired school culture and/or climate, including the research, experiences, and other evidence that informs these decisions.</p> <p>If decisions have not yet been made in certain areas of school culture for certain grades, please explain how decisions will be made at a later date.</p>  |

## VII. Organizational Capacity (New Charter Proposals)

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*About this section:*

Charter Schools must consider the necessary strategies and potential impact for governance and personnel to ensure that they may successfully implement their educational plan. RIDE recognizes that the organizational capacity needs differ for new charter proposals compared to expansions of existing charters. Therefore, the following section focuses specifically on new charter proposals. The subsequent Section IX. Organizational Capacity will follow dedicated for expansions.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*New charter proposals should address the following information in their proposal.*

#### **VIII(a): Establishing Persons or Entities**

Only certain persons or entities are eligible to establish charter schools in Rhode Island, as identified in RIGL § 16-77.2, 16-77.3, or 16-77.4. Please provide information on the person or entity that is establishing this charter school.

*Proposals are required to:*

- Discuss the mission of the establishing person or entity and how their mission aligns with that of the applicant group.
- Describe any affiliations between members of the applicant group and the establishing person or entity (e.g. prior or current employment, family member, membership on board of trustees).
- Describe the role the establishing person or entity will play if the school is approved.

**REQUIRED:** Signature from person or representative of establishing entity on Application Cover Page.

#### **VIII(b): Applicant Group**

Strong, successful applicant groups are diverse in background and experience. Strong applicant groups should exemplify the core competencies, skills, and levels of experience required to successfully start and operate a charter school. If the proposed school has a unique mission, or is proposing to create a specialized program, the applicant group should clearly reflect an ability to fulfill that mission or program. All members of the applicant group will be expected to participate in a capacity interview as a part of the proposal review process.

- Provide a list of individuals that comprise the applicant group, along with brief biographical descriptions.
- Describe how the applicant group was formed and the relationship of its members to each

other.

- Describe each applicant group member's role in crafting the proposal, and the role each intends to fill, if any, in the school if approved.

REQUIRED: Signature of applicant group member on Application Cover Page

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: resumes for all members of the applicant group.

### **VIII(c): Board Development and Duties**

Charter school boards must be equipped to oversee the academic performance of the school and ensure organizational sustainability, including oversight and management of public funds. Charter school boards must be comprised of individuals who have the background and skills to handle decisions on a range of issues, all of which impact the success of the charter school. In return, charter school boards have the autonomy to govern new innovative public schools that change the way students are educated in Rhode Island.

RIGL § 16-2-9 describes the general powers and duties of Rhode Island school committees. Charter school boards share many of these responsibilities. They must comply with the requirements of RI Open Meetings Law (16-42-46) and the regulations of the RI Ethics Commission.

- Provide an assurance that the board will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Describe a process for board member recruitment, review, and election to the charter school board that acknowledges the skills required to successfully govern a charter school.
- Provide a table that includes a list of board positions, the individuals who have committed to serving on the school's board, and the position or role they intend to play. In places where board positions have not yet been filled, please write "vacant" and describe what type of person would best fit that position (e.g. parent, legal expert, etc.)
- Discuss any affiliations between proposed board members and:
  - persons or entities establishing the school
  - comprehensive management providers or partners
  - other contractors or consultants who may provide services to the proposed school
  - each other
- Describe the process by which the board will oversee academic performance.
- Describe the process by which the board will oversee school finances.
- Describe the process by which the board will hire a school leader.
- Describe the process by which the board will hold school leader(s) accountable.
- Describe the process by which teachers and parents can challenge decisions of the board.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: draft bylaws

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: résumés of proposed board members

#### **VIII(d): Staffing Plans**

- Provide an organizational chart (graphic) for the school, and a brief narrative explaining the chart. The chart should describe the reporting structure and relationships of the school's leader, other administrators, teachers, specialists, and other staff members.
- Provide a staffing chart that includes each position and quantity of staff for each year of a five-year charter term. Be sure that the staffing chart responds to all requirements for providing services to students, including special education administration and health program duties. Note any assumptions that were made about the student population to construct this staffing plan.

NOTE: Please ensure that staff titles/descriptions are consistent throughout the proposal.

#### **VIII(e): Leadership**

- Attach a job description for the school's leader. The job description should include a thorough description of the required core competencies, desired skills, expectations, and duties of the school leader.
- If the proposed school board has already selected a proposed school leader, please include a resume and a description of the recruitment process. If the board has not yet committed to a school leader, discuss how the applicant group/board will recruit and select a school leader.
- Provide brief job descriptions of administrators, directors, and other support personnel that comprise the administrative team (including academics, finance, operations, recruitment, parent coordinator, etc.).
- Provide information on the terms and conditions of employment and the qualifications that the employees must meet, including certification.
- Discuss the process by which deputies and directors will be evaluated.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: school leader job description

VOLUNTARY ATTACHMENT: resume of proposed school leader

#### **VIII(f): Teachers**

Strong proposals will give considerable attention to teachers, including the factors that influence and support high-quality teaching and the skills and characteristics of teachers that will be successful at the proposed school. Strong responses will draw a clear and convincing picture of how the proposed school will support and supervise its teachers.

- Describe the specific qualities and characteristics that will be sought in teachers at the proposed charter school, and explain the link between the desired characteristics and the mission and educational program of the school.

- Describe a comprehensive process of teacher recruitment and selection.
- Provide information on the terms and conditions of employment and the qualifications that the employees must meet, including certification.
- Describe the teaching program of typical teachers. Indicate how many hours they will be in class and what other responsibilities they will have.
- Discuss strategies the school will employ to retain high-performing teachers.
- Describe what structures will exist within the typical school week will be implemented to provide teachers with professional development and supports.
- Explain how teachers will be evaluated.
- Describe how the school will support teachers, including how the school will determine the professional development needs and what opportunities will be available.
- Discuss the nature and extent of involvement of teachers in the governance and operations of the proposed school.

#### **VIII(g): Management Organizations and Other Essential Partners**

This subsection is designed to elicit information about comprehensive management providers or other contracted partners whose unique relationship and services to the school will be integral to the operations of the school, such that the charter school's mission, educational program, governance or management structure would fundamentally change if the relationship ended. Examples of essential partners may be charter management organizations (CMOs), school districts, or institutions of higher education.

- Provide the name, contact information, and general information about the organization, district, or institution with which the applicant group proposes to contract for management, support, or partner services.
- Provide a detailed description of the services to be provided, including scope of services, school-specific staff role(s) to be filled, fees to be paid, methods of contract oversight and enforcement, and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract.
- Include an operating/business plan from the managing or partnering entity, which should include any additional plans the organization has to provide services to other entities or schools, and which should demonstrate its capacity to provide the contracted services with the proposed new school.
- If applicable, provide a summary of student achievement results for the other schools managed by or partnered with the management organization.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: most recent audit of managing or partnering entity.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: most recent annual report of managing or partnering entity.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: draft term sheet or contract between management/ partnering entity and proposed charter school.

**VIII(h): Family-School Partnership**

RIDE expects all schools to proactively develop a robust partnership with families, to support the success of students.

- Provide a comprehensive explanation of how parents or guardians will be made to feel welcome at the school, and enable them to be involved in the school community.
- Describe the nature and extent of parent involvement in the governance and operations of the school.
- Discuss a set of strategies the school will employ to ensure parents are empowered and supported.
- Describe how the school will measure and respond to levels of parent and student satisfaction.

## VIII. Organizational Capacity (Expansion Proposals)

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### *About this section:*

Charter Schools must consider the necessary strategies and potential impact for governance and personnel to ensure that they may successfully implement their educational plan. RIDE recognizes that the organizational capacity needs differ for new charter proposals compared to expansions of existing charters. Therefore, the following section focuses specifically on charter expansion proposals. The previous Section X. Organizational Capacity focuses on new charter proposals. For expansions, RIDE expects the impact on charter school's organizational capacity to vary based on the scale of the requested expansion.

### **STANDARD PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION**

#### *Organizational capacity should:*

- Describe key personnel changes (if any) that will occur as a result of the expansion and identify those changes in the attached organizational charts. Key changes should include, at minimum: the identification of the charter school's leadership team; and, if applicable, how the network-level staff will evolve over time.

### **MATERIAL PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION**

#### *Organizational capacity should:*

- Describe and provide rationale for any changes to the charter school's governing board as a result of the requested expansion.
- As an attachment, provide the following three organizational charts: 1) organizational chart as of the 2017-18 school year; 2) organizational chart reflecting the expanded charter at the five-year mark; and 3) an organizational chart for the fully-realized expanded charter (if not fully realized in the first five years).
  - Please note: Only jobs/positions need to be identified, not specifically-named personnel.
  - For network charters with a centralized network-level staff, organizational charts should be provided at both the individual-school and network levels.
- Describe key personnel changes as a result of the expansion and identify those changes in the attached organizational charts. Key changes should include, at minimum: the identification of the charter school's leadership team; and, if applicable, how the network-level staff will evolve over time.
- For all key personnel changes that will occur within the next five years as a result of the requested expansion, please describe the strategies the charter school will use to ensure it properly recruits, hires, and supports the newly added personnel.



## IX. Facilities

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### *About this section:*

Finding a suitable facility for a new and growing charter school is a highly challenging component of new school planning. Charter schools that begin with few students and grow over time will find that they must, on the one hand, find a facility they can manage both operationally and financially, and on the other, minimize the impact of future transitions on existing students and programs. Financial and organizational health and sustainability is highly dependent on careful facilities planning.

NOTE: Applicants for new charter proposals should not list specific facilities or addresses at the proposal stage. RIDE and the applicant will have opportunities to discuss the selection and approval of facilities for use by charter schools.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

#### *The proposal narrative should:*

- Include a set of facilities specifications demonstrating that the applicants understand how program drives facility needs. The specifications should include characteristics relative to site location, building layout, and other building (internal) and site (external) features that would permit the school to operate smoothly and efficiently. Consider the number of core classrooms that are required, other spaces, and square footage of core instructional spaces.
- Describe how facility needs will be impacted by the school's enrollment plan (i.e. how enrolling more students in subsequent years will impact use of the space). If applicable, discuss the timeline by which the school would make significant capital investments, add space, or move from one space to another.
- Describe the plan for and progress toward finding a facility. If applicable, describe the potential challenges of finding a suitable facility, and how you plan to overcome those challenges.
- Summarize your understanding of annual or otherwise regular updates and reports relative to compliance with facilities-related state and local laws and regulations. As this regulatory environment can be challenging and cross various local and state agencies, indicate where they may be gaps in your understanding of the regulatory environment, and how you plan to fill those gaps.
- Provide an assurance that the RIDE Office of Charter Schools will be provided with the terms and conditions for use of a facility, including draft lease or purchase agreements, once a space has been identified.
- Include a description of how the charter school board will support and oversee facilities-related issues.

- Indicate who will oversee operations and maintenance issues at the charter school.

**STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal narrative should:*

- Describe if facility needs will be impacted by the charter school’s requested expansion. (that is, how enrolling more students in subsequent years will impact use of space). If applicable:
  - For any changes in facilities that would need to occur by the 2018-19 school year, describe the current plan and progress towards realizing the necessary changes. If applicable, describe the potential challenges that might be faced, and strategies to overcome those challenges.
  - For any changes in facilities that would occur beyond the 2018-19 school year, describe the charter school’s strategic approach to realizing those changes. If applicable, describe the potential challenges that might be faced, and strategies to overcome those challenges.

**MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The proposal narrative should:*

- Describe how facility needs will be impacted by the charter school’s requested expansion (that is, how enrolling more students in subsequent years will impact use of space). If applicable, discuss the timeline by which the school would make significant capital investments, add space, or move from one space to another.
  - For any changes in facilities that would need to occur by the 2018-19 school year, describe the current plan and progress towards realizing the necessary changes. If applicable, describe the potential challenges that might be faced, and strategies to overcome those challenges.
  - For any changes in facilities that would occur beyond the 2018-19 school year, describe the charter school’s strategic approach to realizing those changes. If applicable, describe the potential challenges that might be faced, and strategies to overcome those challenges.
  - Describe any additional significant operational adjustments that will be required to fulfill the requested expansion (for example, changing of the school calendar).

## X. Operations

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### *About this section:*

Charter schools are responsible for arranging and managing operational services for students. For the purposes of this proposal, “operations” is defined as the coordination and planning required to ensure that the proposed school will operate safely, and that instructional staff have the information and resources they need to perform their duties.

Rules, regulations and resources relating to school health programs and school safety can be found at: <http://www.thriveri.org/>

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

#### *Operations should:*

- Demonstrate an understanding of the statutory and regulatory requirements for school health programs and school safety plans. Provide an assurance that your school will comply with these requirements.
- Describe plans for developing school safety and emergency response plans.
- Describe plans for providing health services to all students, including a plan to hire a nurse.
- Explain the proposed school’s food service and nutrition program.
- Explain the proposed school’s plan for the transportation of students to and from the school, including logistics for arrival and dismissal.
- Explain the proposed school’s plan for human resources, payroll, and purchasing functions.
- Explain the proposed school’s plan for information technology (IT) and data management.

### **STANDARD & MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

#### *Operations should:*

- Describe any key changes to school operations that are a result of the proposed expansion and describe steps that will implement those changes. Or, if applicable, please describe how no operational changes will be needed as a result of the expansion.

# XI. Finance and Budget

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## *About this section:*

Proposals must include a five-year budget projection for the proposed charter school. A template for the budget, the Rhode Island Charter School Budget Projection Workbook, is available on RIDE Charter Schools Webpage. Please note to use either the new charter proposal or expansion proposal versions based on your proposal type.

In addition to the budget projection, applicants must craft a narrative section that justifies the assumptions in the budget projection, and explain how all funds will be managed.

## **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

### *Finance and budget should:*

- Provide a complete and realistic five-year budget projection that appropriately reflects the expenses related to all commitments in the proposal, and indicates that the school can sustain over the five-year charter term and beyond.
- Provide a budget narrative that thoroughly justifies the costs and assumptions made in the budget projection. Included in the five-year budget narrative must be a description of the sources of revenue and expenses for the school's facility, including lease/ debt service as well as estimated operations/maintenance costs, indicating that facilities expenses will not overly burden or strain school operations. Strong proposals will be extremely conservative relative to anticipated private funding streams.
- Provide an overall plan for financial management that includes:
  - a description of the management and oversight of finances at the school, including any staff positions for this purpose and their duties
  - assurances that the school will comply with reporting to the Office of Municipal Affairs and State Auditor General under RIGL 16-77.2-8; 16-77.3-8; 16-77.4-8
  - assurances that the school board will annually seek and approve an operational budget and cash flow statement, with a copy to RIDE
  - assurances that the school will complete a fiscal audit each year with an independent firm, with a copy to RIDE
  - **REQUIRED ATTACHMENT:** five-year budget projection.

## **STANDARD & MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

### *Finance and budget should:*

- Provide a complete and realistic five-year budget projection – starting with the 2018-19 school year – that appropriately reflects the expenses related to the charter school, taking into account the requested expansion.

- Provide a budget narrative that thoroughly justifies the costs and assumptions made in the budget projection. The narrative should provide further focus on any specific changes to the budget that will occur as a result of the requested expansion.

*In addition, as applicable, Requests for Expansion should:*

- Describe the causes that led to and the current status of:
  - Any compliance violations that have led to authorizer intervention
  - Any litigation involving your charter school; and
  - Any material audit findings for your charter school
  - REQUIRED ATTACHMENT: five-year budget projection.

## XII. Schedule & Calendar (New Charter Proposals Only)

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### *About this section:*

Applicants must provide draft schedules for students and teachers, and an annual calendar for the proposed school's first year of operation. The structures in schedule and calendar must account for the statutory requirement to provide appropriate hours/days of instruction, and should tie back to the program plans described in Section VII: Educational Program.

In proposing a school schedule and calendar for the first year of operation, reviewers should have a sense of the breadth of opportunities available for students, both inside and outside of the typical school day.

### *Proposals are required to:*

- Provide a draft daily schedule and narrative that describes the length of each school day, including how much time will be offered for various components of the educational program and clearly aligns with the needs of students and the mission and educational program of the school.
- Provide a draft weekly schedule and narrative that describes how the educational program is rolled out over a typical week. Include before or after-school opportunities for electives, intervention, remediation, tutoring, and extracurricular activities as applicable. Attach a draft school calendar that includes:
  - Total days of instruction for the school year
  - First and last day of classes
  - Organization of the school year (e.g. trimesters, semesters)
  - All planned holidays/ days off
  - Dates for professional development, special days scheduled for mission-specific requirements (e.g. portfolio demonstrations, college days, science fairs etc.)
  - Dates for extended or summer programs, if applicable.
- \Provide a draft schedule of a teachers' work week including:
  - Time devoted to core teaching
  - Time devoted to planning
  - Time devoted to professional development
  - Time devoted to other activities that may be unique to the proposed school's mission or culture

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENT:** Draft school calendar.

## XIII. Startup Timeline (New Charter Proposals Only)

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*About this section:*

Provide a timeline for the school startup period, dating from the anticipated point of preliminary approval through the date of school opening.

### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

*The startup timeline should:*

- Outline a plan that includes the steps necessary for a successful school launch, and ensures that schools meet the regulatory requirements for readiness by the point of final approval.
- Provide a timeline that lists specific actions to be taken.
- Align with all planning activities discussed throughout the proposal.
- Name a point person accountable for actions on the timeline.
- Include any supplemental information that may be applicable.

## XIV. Variances (New Charter Proposals Only)

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### *About this section:*

To the extent allowable in state law, applicants are permitted to request variances from statutes or regulations that may inhibit operation of the proposed charter school. Statutory provisions that may not be waived are itemized in statutes specific to district charter, independent charter, and mayoral academies.

### *Variances should:*

- Identify the state statutes and/or regulations from which variances are sought in order to facilitate operation of the proposed charter school. Explain the purpose of each variance, and the alternative method by which the concern that gave rise to the law or regulation will be addressed.
- FOR DISTRICT CHARTER SCHOOLS ONLY: If any, include which provisions of the collective bargaining agreement will not be applicable to the district charter school. As any provisions included herein are subject to agreement by the parties to the collective bargaining agreement, please also include a letter of support from any and each party to the agreement acknowledging support.



# Appendix A: Required Proposal Narrative Attachments

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## **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

- Resumes of each member of applicant group
- Resumes of prospective Board members
- Draft bylaws
- School leader job description
- Audit of managing/partnering entity (if applicable)
- Annual report of managing/partnering entity (if applicable)
- Draft term sheet or contract with managing/partnering entity (if applicable)
- Draft school calendar
- Five-year budget projection
- Evidence of community support
- Any additional documentation required via Appendix B

## **STANDARD EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

- An enrollment table
- Evidence of community support
- Five-year budget projection

## **MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS – REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

- An enrollment table
- Organizational charts:
  - For the 2017-2018 school year
  - For the expanded charter at the five-year mark
  - For the fully-realized expanded charter if not realized within the first five years
- Five-year budget projection
- Evidence of community support
- Any additional documentation required via Appendix B

## Appendix B: Additional Charter Type Proposal Requirements

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### **NEW CHARTER PROPOSALS:**

#### **District Charter Schools**

*If the proposed charter school is a conversion of a district school into a district charter school, the applicant must:*

- Provide evidence of affirmative votes from two-thirds of the teachers assigned to the school;
- Provide evidence that parents and legal guardians representing a majority of students assigned to the school adopt the conversion plan.

*If the proposed school is a new district charter school, the applicant must:*

- Provide evidence of affirmative support of the number of certified teachers employed within the school district where the district charter school is to be located at least equal to two-thirds of the number of teachers that will be required to staff the proposed district charter school.

#### **Independent Charter Schools**

- If the proposed school is an independent charter school, the applicant must: submit its financial records and financial plan for review by the auditor general as prescribed by RIGL 16-77.3-2(c)
- If proposing a network charter, provide written support from proposed enrolling communities. If written support is not available, explain why and provide a plan for obtaining written support by the anticipated date of preliminary approval.

#### **Mayoral Academies**

- If proposing a network charter, provide written support from proposed enrolling communities. If written support is not available, explain why and provide a plan for obtaining written support by the anticipated date of preliminary approval.
- Mayoral academy proposals must have approval from each city or town of the charter's enrolling communities (catchment area) regarding the participation of each respective city or town in the proposal. Approval must be from each mayor or in the absence of a mayor, the city or town Council via a resolution or ordinance. If a mayor does not provide written support for the proposal, then the proposal may proceed through the approval process by removing the respective district from the catchment area.

### **STANDARD & MATERIAL EXPANSION PROPOSALS (MAYORAL ACADEMIES ONLY):**

Proposed mayoral academy expansions must have approval from each city or town of the charter's enrolling communities (catchment area) regarding the participation of each respective city or town in the proposed expansion. Approval must be from each mayor or in the absence of a mayor, the city or town Council via a resolution or ordinance. If a mayor does not provide written support for the expansion, then the proposed expansion may proceed through the approval process by removing the respective district from the expansion's catchment area.

## Appendix C: Definition of Terms

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The following terms are used frequently in this proposal document. Definitions (as defined by RIDE and Rhode Island regulations) are below.

1. **New Charter Proposal:** A request for a new charter resulting in a brand new charter.
2. **Expansion:** An expansion is understood to be: 1) an increase in total enrollment; 2) an increase in the grade levels previously authorized in the original charter; or 3) the addition of a school district to the catchment area. An approved request for expansion will result in an amendment to the existing charter.
3. **Standard Expansion Proposal:** A proposal for expansion in total enrollment for an existing charter, less than both 25% of current enrollment and 100 students, with no material changes to the charters' grade levels, enrollment catchment area, nor the addition of a new school to the charter.
4. **Material Expansion Proposal:** A proposal for an expansion for an existing charter that will result in any of the following: a) an increase of enrollment at least 25% of current enrollment or 100 students; b) changes to the charter's grade levels; c) changes to the charter's enrollment catchment area; and/or, d) the addition of at least one new school.
5. **Network Charter School:** A charter public school will be considered a network charter school if it intends to include both elementary and secondary schools or multiple elementary and/or multiple secondary schools. "Multiple elementary or secondary schools" means that the schools operate independently from one another with individual school budgets and school administrators (such as a school principal). The schools could be co-located; however, the schools run a separate lottery and enrollment process and would receive distinct school codes for statewide data reporting. RIDE will consider any proposal containing elementary and high school grades as a network charter proposal.
6. **Proven track record of achievement and success:** Schools seeking to expand their charter must have a clear track record of academic achievement among all students. RIDE will review all available data to evaluate whether not a charter has a clear track record of success. This evidence will definitively include an analysis of the charter's performance on the statewide accountability system. A clear track record should not include any significant deficiencies in student performance on the statewide accountability or charter school performance review systems. In addition, charters may provide additional evidence of performance against internal assessment data or other reliable measures. While RIDE will review all available data in evaluating a school's track record, RIDE will heavily consider the most recent year of student achievement data as the clearest indicator of a school's current ability to provide future quality educational opportunities.
7. **Written Support:** "Written support" means a resolution or ordinance granted by the town or city Council for each proposed sending district where the Council considers the fiscal and educational welfare of the municipality and students after at least one public hearing.

## Appendix D: Proposal Checklist

| Application Section                           | New Charter Proposal | Material Expansion Proposal | Standard Expansion Proposal |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I. Cover Sheet                                | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| II. Executive Summary                         | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| III. Mission Statement                        | √                    | √                           | -                           |
| IV. Proposed New Student Seats and Enrollment | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| V. Goals                                      | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| VI. Community Need and Support                | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| VII. Educational Program                      | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| VIII. Organizational Capacity                 | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| IX. Facilities                                | √                    | √                           | -                           |
| X. Operations                                 | √                    | √                           | -                           |
| XI. Finance and Budget                        | √                    | √                           | √                           |
| XII. Schedule and Calendar                    | √                    | -                           | -                           |
| XIII. Startup Timeline                        | √                    | -                           | -                           |
| XIV. Variances                                | √                    | -                           | -                           |